

TESTIMONY In Support of HB 5122,
HB 5128, HB 5301 and SB 627

Transportation Comm. Public Hearing
Wednesday February 13, 2013

JIM CAMERON / Chairman
CT Metro-North Rail Commuter Council



My name is Jim Cameron. I reside in Darien and serve as Chairman of the CT Metro-North Rail Commuter Council.

As the representatives of the 115,000 daily riders of Metro-North in Connecticut, The Council is grateful that a number of bills have been submitted with a similar goal: to make certain that fares on our trains are spent on rail service and nothing else.

THE PROBLEM:

The Special Transportation Fund has been regularly raided in past budgets. Those monies, raised through rail fares, should only be spent on improving mass transit in our state, not plugging deficit holes in the budget.

CT commuters have seen 10% fare hikes over the past two years with another 5% fare increase to come in 2014. If those funds are not spent on rail operations, those fare hikes are actually a tax on commuters.

We cannot rebuild our crumbling roads / rails / bridges if mass transit fares are diverted.

THE SOLUTION:

The Special Transportation Fund must be turned into a "lock box" with a very loud alarm attached when budget writers try to dip into its fund.

Rail fares should be spent on transportation, not balancing the budget.

The Connecticut Metro-North Rail Commuter Council

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